

Kirklees Council

Homes and Neighbourhoods

**Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement
Report 2025/26**

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Introduction

At Kirklees Council, we are committed to providing high-quality housing services for all our tenants and leaseholders. We know that sometimes things do not go as expected, and when that happens, it is important that residents can raise concerns easily and with confidence. Your feedback plays a vital role in helping us understand what is working well and where we need to improve, which is why our complaints process is designed to be fair, accessible and focused on putting things right.

When handling housing-related complaints, we follow the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which sets out clear standards for how landlords must deal with and learn from complaints. As a statutory requirement for all social housing providers, the Code helps ensure that we respond to complaints promptly, fairly, and in a way that supports positive outcomes for residents.

Each year we complete a self-assessment against the Code to confirm how well we are meeting these standards. The latest assessment is published on our website so tenants and leaseholders can see how we are performing and the improvements we are making.

Your feedback is essential in shaping better services. Complaints give us valuable insight into residents' experiences and help us identify where change is needed. Later in this report, you will find examples of improvements already delivered in 2025/26, as well as the actions we are taking forward into the next year.

This annual report accompanies our published self-assessment (Appendix B) and sets out:

- How well we have handled complaints this year
- What the Housing Ombudsman has found in cases involving Kirklees Council
- What we have learned from complaints and the service improvements now underway

If you have any questions about this report, or would like to share your views on our complaints process, please contact us at HN.Customer.Service@kirklees.gov.uk

Complaints Handling Performance

Summary Table

Table 1- H&N KPI Summary Table

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	2024- 2025	2025-2026
Stage 1 complaints made per 1,000 homes (ytd)	36.54	37.29
Stage 2 complaints made per 1,000 homes (ytd)	11.83	10.79
Stage 1 complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales (ytd)	82.71%	71.54%
Stage 2 complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales (ytd)	68.18%	77.83%
% stage 1 upheld (fully or partially)	64.34%	62.05%
% stage 2 upheld (fully or partially)	63.22%	51.58%

H&N KPIs data includes all complaints across all tenures and therefore includes complaints made by leaseholders, owner occupiers and members of the public.

Table 2- TSM Management Information Data Table

TSM ID	Tenant Satisfaction Measure Management Information Data	2024-2025	2025-2026	2024-25 Benchmark
CH01	Number of Stage 1 complaints relative to the size of the landlord (number of complaints per 1,000 properties)	36.21	32.9	46.90
CH01	Number of Stage 2 complaints relative to the size of the landlord (number of complaints per 1,000 properties)	11.71	9.4	9.00
CH02	Stage 1 complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	69.57%	69.20%	96.3%
CH02	Stage 2 complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	58.89%	69.85%	86.1%

Table 3- TSM Tenant Perception Data

TSM ID	Tenant Perception Data	2024-2025	2025-2026	2024-25 Benchmark
TP09	Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling.	22%	25%	36.1%

TSM data uses technical requirements as set out by the Regulator of Social Housing, and therefore only includes complaints made by residents in Low-Cost Rental Accommodation (LCRA) owned by Kirklees Council, and 1,775 tenants took part in the tenant satisfaction measures survey which represents 8% of all households.

Themes and Types of Complaints

In 2025-2026, new complaints and complaint escalations reduced when looking at LCRA only but increased when assessed across all tenure types. However, the number of stage 1 complaints remains under the benchmark, and the Stage 2's are slightly above in both data sets.

Of all new complaints, 46% were about property condition, or a repair. This includes complaints about damp, mould and condensation, which account for 12% of all new complaints.

Anti-social behaviour is another leading reason for complaints with 11.5% of all new complaints being about the handling of anti-social behaviour, 11.5% were complaints where the residents indicated they were unhappy with the approach from a member of staff and 9.9% related to the maintenance or repair of external areas including communal areas and grass cutting.

In a later section of this report called 'Learning from complaints', it sets out how complaints data has been used as a key source of insight to help us to understand how our services are experienced and the completed and planned service improvements link directly to the issues residents are reporting to us through the complaints process.

We analyse complaint volumes, themes and outcomes, and identify recurring issues to inform our service improvement activity beyond that of individual case.

Compliance Against Timescales

At Stage 1 of the complaints process we handled 69.20% of complaints within the timescales set out in the code i.e. 5 working days to log, define and acknowledge the complaint and provide a response within 10 working days. This is very similar to last year and against a target of 96.3%.

At Stage 2, 69.85% of complaints were handled within the required timescales. This is almost 10% improvement against last year.

However, we recognise this is an area of our performance that requires improvement. Adhering to the timescales set out in the code not only ensures our compliance against the code but

ensures residents are treated consistently and fairly and responding within agreed timescales shows respect for the resident's concern to help build confidence in our service.

We are introducing a service-wide complaints panel in quarter 1 of 2025-2026, this will provide regular scrutiny of live and closed cases, enabling closer monitoring of response times at Stage 1 and Stage 2, and identification of patterns of delay. We are also recruiting to a tenant-led service quality panel where tenants will be able to provide scrutiny and challenge over performance, and work with us to identify areas of learning.

Demographics

The demographic information currently available in relation to tenants who have made complaints provides a useful but incomplete indication of who is using the complaints process. The clearest picture is available for age, where recording levels are sufficiently high to show that most recorded complaints at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 were made by tenants aged 25 to 64. Stage 2 complaints broadly reflect the same age profile as Stage 1.

These findings should, however, be treated with appropriate caution. While age data is comparatively strong, other equality data is less complete. Gender and ethnicity data allow only limited interpretation, disability data is partial, and religion and sexual orientation data are currently too incomplete to support meaningful conclusions. In addition, as the tenant census is not yet complete, this analysis is more helpful in showing the profile of tenants who have made complaints than in determining whether any particular group is over- or under-represented across the wider tenant population.

It is also important not to assume that lower complaint volumes from some groups necessarily indicate lower levels of dissatisfaction. For example, lower recorded complaint volumes from older tenants may reflect barriers to access, lower awareness of how to complain, or digital exclusion, rather than lower need or fewer service concerns. This underlines the importance of ensuring that complaint routes are clear, accessible and well communicated to tenants who may not use online channels.

In response, work is underway to strengthen both the accessibility of the complaints process and the quality of the demographic information captured. This includes reviewing how non-digital routes to complaint are communicated and used, and improving the Respond system so that key demographic fields are captured more consistently, with mandatory completion where appropriate and clear options such as "prefer not to say". Until tenant census work is complete, the Council will continue to use the best available information to monitor who is making complaints, identify gaps in data and engagement, and improve the evidence base for future equality analysis and service improvement.

Complaints Not Logged

We do not always treat every issue as a formal complaint. If a resident is reporting a problem for the first time, such as a repair or anti-social behaviour, we will usually treat this as a service request so we can try to put things right quickly. We may also not accept a complaint where the issue has already been through both stages of our complaints process, relates to matters outside our responsibility, is being handled through insurance or legal proceedings, concerns rent levels, or happened more than 12 months ago. If we decide not to accept an issue as a complaint, we

will explain why in writing and tell our resident how they can contact the Housing Ombudsman if they disagree. This year we were unable to accept 139 complaints.

Satisfaction with Complaints Handling

How did you find our complaint handling?

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures framework was designed to cover the most widespread concerns amongst social housing tenants, including using language that relates to the everyday experiences of using these services.

This includes asking survey respondents to decide for themselves if they have recently complained to their landlord rather than limiting it to a narrow definition of what constitutes a formal complaint.

Therefore, to gain more insight of your experience with the formal complaint process, we request feedback specifically from residents that have experienced our formal complaint process, via text. The response rate for this survey is 11.20%. Of the surveys responded to, 27% of respondents said they were happy with the overall handling of their complaint, 46% found the process easy, 40% were happy with speed of the complaint handling, 68% said they would be comfortable to make a complaint in the future and 43% were happy with the information provided throughout their complaint.

We do often find that the satisfaction levels when completing the text survey results are often indicative of whether a resident is happy with the outcome of their complaint, however, through future engagement, we aim to gain even more insight into how we can ensure our residents are satisfied with H & N complaints handling.

Compliments

We received 92 compliments this year, 67 were about our repairs service, 12 about our Housing Management and Partnerships Service, 7 about our complaints handling, 6 were about our Asset Management Teams and Business Development Teams. Through these compliments residents gave examples of good customer care, and 12 reported respectful manner in which their complaint was handled. Some examples of the compliments received are shown below:

Please pass on my thanks to the two young men who provided a prompt, efficient, polite and friendly service in cleaning out the guttering to my home today.

I recently had a new kitchen fitted, and I wanted to let you know how fantastic each and every person involved with it was. They were all friendly, respectful and professional. I'm so happy with the kitchen and the whole process was a good experience, because of the wonderful team involved. Thank you to each and every one.

This is to acknowledge and thank the member of staff for his plastering work carried out at my property today. He was polite, friendly, respectful of myself and my property, chatty,

professional and helpful and his strong work ethic and pride in his work, right down to his thorough clean-up was evident from the start.

He was conscientious, polite, helpful, friendly and respectful - to/of both myself and my property - and he kept me informed of what he was doing throughout the entire job, he worked tirelessly to do what was required and took care and pride in his work throughout the two days at my property.

Housing Ombudsman Determinations

Determinations Summary

During the period April 2025 to March 2026, the Ombudsman issued 67 outcomes, with approximately 69% identifying failings across our services. This is a slight increase on the previous year.

Outcomes and Orders from the Housing Ombudsman

Table 4- Table of Housing Ombudsman Determinations

Complaint	Date and outcome received	Orders and recommendations
202324759	11/04/2025 Maladministration- Handling of Anti-Social Behaviour Service Failure- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay compensation
202408525	22/04/2025 No maladministration- Handling of staff conduct concern	No orders made
202423376	30/04/2025 Maladministration- Roof Replacement	Provide a written apology Review staff training and procedures in relation to repairs
202427118	29/04/2025 Maladministration- Damp, Mould and Condensation Service Failure- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation Arrange an inspection Arrange complaint handling training Arrange vulnerability training
202414629	30/05/2025 Maladministration- Damp, Mould and Condensation Service Failure- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation
202419450	30/05/2025 No Maladministration- Handling of Anti-Social Behaviour	No orders made

Complaint	Date and outcome received	Orders and recommendations
	No Maladministration- Handling of staff conduct concern Reasonable Redress- Complaint Handling	
202322413	09/06/2025 Service Failure- replacement fire Maladministration- Damp, Mould and Condensation Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation Contact re current and future repairs Arrange an inspection Arrange complaint handling training
202330211	16/06/2025 Severe Maladministration- Handling of Anti-Social Behaviour Service Failure- Permission request	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation Arrange a staff training exercise
202326670	02/07/2025 Service Failure- Grounds Maintenance	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation
202417906	30/07/2025 Maladministration- Access to electric meter Service failure- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation
202346122	31/07/2025 Service Failure- Noise	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation
202444641	30/07/2025 Maladministration- Damp, Mould and Condensation Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation Arrange a survey Consider if reasonable adjustments are required
202302163	11/08/2025 Maladministration- Handling of Anti-Social Behaviour	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation
202339693	20/08/2025 Service Failure- Outhouse roof No Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation Arrange a temporary repair
202421239	21/08/2025 No Maladministration- Response to tree on adjacent land dropping leaves/sap	No orders made
202337870	26/09/2025 Maladministration- Handling of Anti-Social Behaviour No Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation

Complaint	Date and outcome received	Orders and recommendations
202420359	29/09/2025 Service Failure- Withdrawal of assisted garden scheme	Pay the resident compensation
202422118	30/09/2025 No Maladministration- Handling of pests Maladministration- Damp, Mould and Condensation Service Failure- Damaged items No Maladministration- Staff Conduct Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation Update health and vulnerability records Provide insure details
202340525	10/10/2025 Service Failure- Handling of Anti-Social Behaviour Service Failure- Various Repairs Maladministration- Damp, Mould and Condensation	Pay the resident compensation Carry out a repair if not already completed
202407259	15/10/2025 Service Failure- Request to install gas Service Failure- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation
202426287	29/10/2025 No Maladministration- Handling of Anti-Social Behaviour Service Failure- Handling of garden space allocation Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation
202400388	29/10/2025 Severe Maladministration- delays in repairs and decant Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation Carry out a strategic review of the case.
202405116	29/10/2025 Maladministration- Damp, Mould and Condensation No Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation
202429151	30/10/2025 Maladministration- Report of staff conduct concerns Service Failure- Request for Management Let	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation ASB case review Reassess the management let request

Complaint	Date and outcome received	Orders and recommendations
	Service Failure- Reports of Handling of Anti-Social Behaviour Reasonable Redress- Complaint Handling	Investigate the staff conduct concerns
202306969	03/11/2025 Maladministration- adaptations No Maladministration- Handling of repairs No Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation
202400569	24/11/2025 No Maladministration- Handling of defects No Maladministration- Handling of heating issues No Maladministration- Handling of use of solar panels	No orders made
202514199	19/12/2025 No Maladministration- Management of request to change tenancy details No Maladministration- Complaint Handling	No orders made
202509466	22/01/2026 Maladministration- Damp, Mould and Condensation No Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation Inspection order
202422907	05/02/2026 Resolved with HOS intervention- Adult safeguarding	Pay the resident
202344417	12/02/2026 No Maladministration- Rent account query No Maladministration- Complaint Handling	No orders made
202316664	27/02/2026 Maladministration- Decant delays, support and communication Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation
202402930	03/03/2026 Maladministration- Handling of roof leak Maladministration- Complaint Handling	Provide a written apology Pay the resident compensation Inspection order

We have complied with all Orders made by the Housing Ombudsman Service and received no Complaint Handling Failure Orders.

The Housing Ombudsman publishes all [decisions](#) on their website and in addition to [Landlord Performance Reports](#).

Learning from Complaints

Complaints provide valuable insight into where our services are working well and where improvements are needed. When residents share their experiences, it gives us essential intelligence that helps us identify underlying issues, strengthen our processes, and drive meaningful improvements across Homes and Neighbourhoods.

Effective complaint handling allows us to look beyond individual cases and understand how our services are perceived by tenants, what barriers residents may face, and where our communication or service delivery has not met expectations. Each complaint, and the learning that comes from it, helps us refine the quality, consistency and focus of the services we provide.

This section summarises the key learning identified and the actions we will take forward into 2027 to continue improving the service we provide our residents.

Quality Homes

Cabinet approved a £390m five-year Housing Capital Investment Plan in December 2025, setting out how the council will continue to invest in and improve its housing stock. The plan provides a long-term commitment to ensuring homes are safe, decent and fit for the future, while meeting regulatory requirements and supporting service improvements. This is expected to support a reduction in complaints relating to property condition and repairs.

Kirklees Council's Housing Capital Investment Plan, Stock Condition Survey (SCS) programme, and Asset Management Strategy (AMS) will work together to deliver sustained improvements to the quality, safety and condition of council homes, while also contributing to a reduction in complaints about repairs and property condition. The Capital Investment Plan prioritises funding to address the most significant and recurring issues raised by residents, including the replacement of ageing components, improvements to building safety, and targeted investment in homes most at risk of disrepair. By focusing on planned and preventative works, the council aims to reduce the need for repeat reactive repairs, minimise disruption to residents, and improve the reliability of repair services.

The SCS programme is currently being explored for acceleration to improve the pace at which the council develops a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of its housing stock. This is intended to strengthen the evidence base underpinning investment decisions and support regulatory assurance. The SCS is primarily focused on component condition and remaining life, alongside additional surveys covering Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and Energy Performance Certificates (EPC). The inclusion of HHSRS assessments provides greater visibility of potential hazards within the stock, supporting earlier identification and mitigation of risks such as damp and mould. The EPC surveys will ensure updated and consistent energy

performance data, supporting retrofit planning, improving thermal performance, and aligning with wider sustainability objectives.

Stock condition data provides a robust evidence base that enables the council to better understand the underlying causes of property-related complaints, such as damp and mould, poor thermal performance, or component failure. This allows issues to be identified earlier and addressed at scale, rather than through individual complaint responses, supporting a shift from reactive problem-solving to longer-term, planned interventions. Whilst the SCS (Stock Condition Survey) is not intended to act as a mechanism for reporting responsive repairs (other than the identification of Category 1 and Category 2 hazards), intelligence from responsive repairs trends will be considered alongside SCS outputs as part of the wider AMS review.

The acceleration of the SCS will directly inform a full rewrite of the Asset Management Strategy throughout 2026, supported by robust consultation with tenants, staff, and key stakeholders. The AMS will bring this intelligence together, setting a clear long-term approach to managing housing stock in a way that improves outcomes for residents. It will support informed decisions about where to invest to achieve the greatest improvement in property condition, help reduce future complaints, and ensure homes remain safe, well maintained and fit for purpose.

Collectively, these plans demonstrate how learning from repairs and property-related complaints is being translated into targeted investment, improved service delivery, and better homes for residents. By developing a clearer understanding of component replacement requirements and improving how planned investment is communicated with tenants, the council will be better positioned to manage expectations, reduce dissatisfaction, and reinforce its commitment to continuous improvement as a responsive and responsible social landlord. Alongside capital investment, improvements to day-to-day repairs services are being delivered through improved appointment management, clearer communication with tenants and enhanced oversight of contractor performance

Damp and Mould

Between January and June 2025, the Council moved from peak backlog conditions to a business-as-usual position. All relevant team were co-located creating a single, integrated service responsible for managing cases of damp, mould and condensation from the residents initial report through survey, treatment, repairs and aftercare, improving visibility, accountability and data accuracy.

Weekly performance reporting was introduced providing senior managers with clear oversight of surveys, treatments, repairs and case volumes with the Damp Management Action Group continuing to provide multi-disciplinary governance, ensuring risks were identified early and progress was maintained against agreed trajectories.

Updates to the Tenancy Agreements have clarified resident and landlord responsibilities. An agreed Environmental Protection Act (EPA) escalation process has been implemented to manage persistent no-access cases. In these cases legal enforcement can be relied on where necessary to ensure compliance with future Awaab's Law expectations.

We have provided additional training to all staff working within the Damp, Mould and Condensation Team to ensure they have the necessary level of knowledge and skills to respond

to DMC cases and prepare for the phased expansion of legislative requirements under Awaab's Law.

Case allocation processes have been strengthened to ensure surveys were scheduled within 10 working days, with surveyor workloads allocated multiple times per week. This improved responsiveness, supports compliance with the anticipated statutory timescales under Awaab's Law and reduces the risk of future backlogs.

A central DMC case management tracker now provides a complete audit trail including photographs, access attempts and follow-up actions. Self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's damp and mould spotlight report was also reviewed and updated to ensure we are compliant.

Our focus has now shifted from the prevention to future resilience. We are ensuring that through our stock condition surveys they proactively identify unreported DMC issues. We are also planning for some environmental sensor trials in properties with recurring problems, and we are also considering how we may respond to seasonal fluctuations in demand.

Upgrading our Repairs System

Complaints analysis highlighted recurring issues within the repairs service relating to delays, communication, and repeat visits. In response, the Total Repairs system upgrade addressed these root causes by improving repair tracking, case ownership, performance monitoring, and information accuracy. Although not a complaints-specific system, the upgrade supports improved complaint handling by providing clearer audit trails, better oversight, and earlier intervention, helping to reduce repeat failures and improve service delivery.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

During the year, we reviewed feedback from residents, complaints and independent scrutiny about our handling of anti-social behaviour (ASB). This highlighted areas where our response was not always consistent, timely or sufficiently supportive, particularly around early case set-up, communication, recognition of vulnerability and progressing enforcement. In response, we introduced a set of service improvements to strengthen how we receive, triage, investigate and resolve ASB complaints, and to ensure residents are kept informed throughout.

We introduced a new ASB Policy (March 2025) which sets clear expectations for early intervention, prompt case set-up and regular, meaningful contact with residents.

We delivered mandatory ASB training for Housing Officers and introduced ASB e-learning to embed consistent practice and provide refresher learning. Staff are required to confirm they have read and understood relevant policies.

We strengthened how we capture vulnerability information at sign-up and implemented a new Vulnerable Tenant Policy (March 2025), supported by mandatory training and e-learning so vulnerabilities are identified, recorded and considered throughout the life of a case.

We strengthened assurance through Strategic Manager audits of ASB complaint responses and introduced peer manager audits of live ASB cases, ensuring learning is shared and practice improves.

We reinforced expectations for timely and proportionate enforcement within the ASB Policy and procedures. We also updated the Tenancy Agreement (August 2025) to provide clearer behavioural expectations and stronger tools to tackle ASB where needed.

We are establishing a dedicated ASB team within Housing Management to provide a consistent, specialist response across Kirklees, improve evidence-gathering and maintain a clear single point of contact for victims and perpetrators. The dedicated team will work closely with partner agencies, including Safer Kirklees and Neighbourhood Policing Teams, to provide more coordinated support and quicker escalation where circumstances change.

To increase awareness and trust in our response, we planned ASB pop-up events across Kirklees (May 2026), including in-person and online sessions. Feedback from these events will be used to shape future engagement.

We have also launched Estate Action Plans for every estate, translating local priorities into practical, actions focused on issues such as ASB, safety and environmental improvements. Plans are informed by resident feedback, walkabouts, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, case data and partner intelligence, and are reviewed monthly and updated at least quarterly.

Together, these changes strengthen our end-to-end response to ASB complaints by making it easier to assess risk and vulnerability early, improving the consistency and quality of investigations, and ensuring residents receive clearer updates and decisions. We will continue to monitor performance, review casework and complaints for learning, and refine our approach so residents feel listened to, supported and safe in their homes.

As part of the new ASB Team, there will also be an officer solely responsible for ASB that is causing environmental issues. Estate caretakers, introduction of enhanced winter works programme to tackle problem areas. This includes team action days where we tackle whole estates

Tenancy Enablement Team

The Tenancy Enablement Team plays a critical role in supporting tenancy sustainment, safeguarding, and early intervention across Homes & Neighbourhoods. The team works proactively with tenants and household members, particularly those who may be vulnerable or at risk, to understand individual circumstances, identify unmet needs, and ensure timely support is put in place. By combining tenancy sustainment, safeguarding, money advice, and employment support, the team takes a person-centred and preventative approach that complements core housing management activity and strengthens multi-agency working.

The key benefits of the team include improved tenancy sustainment outcomes, reduced risk of tenancy failure, eviction and repeat homelessness, and earlier identification of safeguarding concerns. The team supports better “knowing our customers” by capturing and sharing accurate vulnerability data, enabling services to be tailored more effectively and safely. Their work will also support community safety and reduced anti-social behaviour.

Tenant Census

During the next year, we will use the tenant census to strengthen how services are planned and delivered, ensuring they are better tailored to the needs of residents. By improving the accuracy and completeness of information about household circumstances, communication preferences, accessibility requirements, and vulnerabilities, the census will enable services to be designed and delivered in ways that are clearer, more accessible, and responsive to individual needs, including through reasonable adjustments, appropriate communication formats, and targeted support.

Service Quality Audits

During 2026/27, Homes and Neighbourhoods audit of our Service Delivery across both repairs and housing management services as part of a structured programme of service assurance and improvement. These frameworks will be embedded into routine management activity, with regular case reviews, spot checks, and tenant feedback used to monitor how services are delivered in practice.

This will include tenant feedback calls following completed jobs and monthly spot checks of operatives and teams. Managers will routinely review recent cases and undertake deeper monthly reviews to identify themes or patterns in decision-making, communication, and follow-through. The focus of both approaches is on behaviour, clarity of communication, consistency of service, and how tenants experience interactions with staff.

Audit findings will be used constructively to provide timely feedback, coaching, and targeted training where required. Where patterns indicate wider issues, learning will inform team briefings, refresher training, process changes, or clarification of guidance. This ensures that improvements are made early and proportionately, rather than relying on complaints escalation to highlight concerns.

By consistently auditing how staff communicate with tenants, explain decisions, and demonstrate professionalism and respect, these frameworks will directly address the root causes of many complaints about staff, including perceived rudeness, poor communication, lack of clarity, or inconsistent treatment. They provide clear expectations for staff conduct and decision-making, while also giving managers the evidence needed to intervene and support improvement.

Over time, this approach is expected to reduce complaints relating to staff behaviour and customer experience by improving consistency, strengthening accountability, and ensuring that all tenants receive a fair, respectful, and understandable service, regardless of who they deal with or where they live. It also supports earlier resolution of issues for tenants, reducing frustration, escalation, and repeat complaints.

Complaints Improvement Programme

We have continued to assess the effectiveness of our complaints handling and have made further improvement throughout the last year.

The Complaints Policy has been updated to reflect changes arising from the Housing Ombudsman's policy review and the introduction of new regulatory frameworks. The policy was updated to reflect changes relating to heat networks. These updates support a more transparent, consistent and resident-focused approach to complaint handling.

The Redress Policy was updated to align with the Housing Ombudsman's revised Remedies Guidance (February 2026). Changes focused on strengthening the framework for compensation decisions, ensuring clarity around discretionary and quantifiable payments, and reinforcing the use of non-financial remedies such as apologies, practical actions and service improvements. The policy also clarifies roles and responsibilities for redress decisions and strengthens links between complaint outcomes, learning and service improvement. We have also developed a redress matrix support consistent application of this policy.

The Council have audited 50% of complaint responses to assess the quality, tone, accuracy, timeliness and compliance of responses against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and council policies, ensuring that responses are fair, empathetic, evidence-based and outcome-focused. Findings from the audits will continue to be shared with managers and Heads of Service to inform operational plans, targeted training and service improvements, to reduce unnecessary escalations to Stage 2 and to the Housing Ombudsman.

A new Complaints Resources site has been introduced that brings together key guidance, templates, policies, good practice examples and links to Ombudsman learning resources in one accessible place for staff handling complaints. It is designed to provide practical, day-to-day support for managers investigating and responding to complaints, helping to improve the quality, tone and consistency of responses.

Through the annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code, landlords are required to evidence that their complaints policies and practices are fair, transparent and compliant, including how they manage exceptional circumstances such as unreasonable behaviour. We have therefore written a new Unreasonable Behaviour Policy and will be seeking approval for this during 2026-2027.

Through the review of complaint cases and Housing Ombudsman determinations, Kirklees Council has identified clear areas where services, processes and policies required strengthening and has taken direct action to address these. Learning from cases highlighted issues such as inconsistent redress decisions, delays in repairs, weaknesses in communication and record-keeping, and gaps in how complex issues such as damp and mould, anti-social behaviour and vulnerability were managed. In response, the Council has updated key policies to ensure greater clarity, consistency and compliance with Ombudsman expectations, including strengthening the Redress Policy to align with Ombudsman guidance, introducing clearer

processes within repairs and maintenance to improve appointment management and communication, and implementing new policies such as the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Vulnerable Tenant Policy.

To strengthen assurance further, the Council has commissioned an independent review of complaints handling through David Tolson Partnership planned to be completed by 30 June 2026. This will assess the effectiveness of the current complaints improvement plan, review the resilience of existing the operating model and provide recommendations to ensure the service is able to manage both the volume and complexity of complaints.

This will help guide new Complaint Handling Training that will be provided over the next year and will help us assess the benefits of a Dispute Resolution Team to help resolve more complex complaints earlier and improve outcomes for residents. This team would work alongside existing service teams, not replace them and would provide additional mitigations in complaint handling to ensure a timely and effective complaint resolution.

A Complaints Panel of Senior Managers will meet monthly from Quarter 1 to provide a structured forum to review, analyse, and learn from complaints across housing services. Its purpose is to identify recurring themes, systemic issues, and service risks, and to ensure that learning from complaints and Housing Ombudsman determinations is used to improve policy, practice, and service delivery.

Complaints will also be monitored at an operational level through weekly tracking of live cases, including those at risk of breaching timescales and overdue complaints, enabling early intervention and active management of performance. The Homes and Neighbourhoods Senior Leadership Team have direct oversight of weekly case reports.

To ensure we can identify any inequalities or disproportionate impacts of services the complaints system is also being developed to include additional data on the demographics of residents making complaints so we can and improve our service through targeted service improvements.

Knowledge and Information Strategy

We recognise that weaknesses in record keeping are a recurring theme across our complaints and Housing Ombudsman casework, often affecting our ability to evidence actions taken, provide timely and accurate responses, and demonstrate learning. In response, we will undertake a self-assessment against the Knowledge and Information Management Strategy (KIMS), which sets out how organisations create, store, manage and use information in a clear, consistent and accessible way across the full lifecycle of a case. This includes standards for accurate record creation, version control, retention, accessibility, and information sharing, ensuring that key decisions, communications and actions are properly documented and easy to retrieve. Strengthening our approach in this area will directly improve complaint handling by enabling officers to respond based on complete and reliable information, reducing delays

caused by missing or unclear records, improving the quality and consistency of responses, and strengthening our ability to evidence compliance and learning in Ombudsman investigations.

New Homes and Neighbourhood Website

We've redesigned the Homes & Neighbourhoods section of the council website to make it easier for tenants to find the information they need.

The new pages are written in plain English, designed for mobile, and structured around what tenants actually need to do: report a repair, pay rent, find safety information, or Get Involved.

What's changed

- Clearer language- jargon removed, written at an accessible reading level
- Mobile-friendly- over 65% of visitors use their phone, so every page is optimised for smaller screens
- Tenant-focused structure - organised around what tenants need, not our internal teams
- Emergency info upfront- safety pages now lead with emergency contact details
- "What happens next" sections- so tenants know what to expect after they contact us

We have also introduced a new feature that allows residents to upload documents or photos when sending us a complaint via the online complaint form to increase the speed at which the complaint is logged and the investigation is started.

Complaints Handling Governance

A quarterly programme of performance reporting is in place which is reported to Tenant Led Panel (TLP) for resident feedback before being presented to the Homes and Neighbourhoods' Senior Management Team (SMT), the Council's Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board (HNIB) which is independently chaired. The Cabinet also receives periodic updates as well as the Council's Scrutiny Function. These reports include updates on complaint volumes, performance, learning, Housing Ombudsman casework including compliance with maladministration orders and updates on self-assessments. Ultimate responsibility for compliance against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code and the Regulator for Social Housing's Consumer Standards (which includes complaints handling) lies with the Council's Cabinet as the overall governing body.

Governance statements

Leader of Kirklees Council

Councillor Sarah Wood

This Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report provides an overview of complaints handling performance within Homes and Neighbourhoods during the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. It also demonstrates how tenant feedback, complaints and Housing Ombudsman findings are being used to inform service improvement and strengthen the services we provide. Based on last year's governance statement, Cabinet's role is to review the report and self-assessment as part of its responsibility as the council's governing body.

As the council's governing body, Cabinet has reviewed this report and the accompanying self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code to ensure there is appropriate oversight of complaints handling arrangements and the actions being taken in response to identified areas of improvement. Last year's statement similarly recorded Cabinet's review of the report and acceptance of the self-assessment.

Complaints provide an important source of insight into the experiences of tenants and leaseholders. They help us understand where services are performing well, where improvements are required and where changes are needed to improve outcomes for residents. Cabinet welcomes the progress that has been made during the year and recognises the continued commitment to learning from complaints and using that learning to improve services.

Cabinet is satisfied that the self-assessment provides an accurate reflection of the council's position and that appropriate arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with the Complaint Handling Code, oversee delivery of improvement actions and ensure learning continues to be embedded across the service.

Cabinet remains committed to openness, transparency and continuous improvement. We expect complaints, resident feedback and wider assurance activity to continue driving improvements that strengthen services and improve the experience of tenants and leaseholders.

Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)

Councillor Philip James

In my role as the Council's Member Responsible for Complaints, I have reviewed and challenged the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and the accompanying self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. In doing so, I have sought assurance that complaints are being handled fairly and effectively, that learning is being identified and acted upon, and that improvement activity is addressing the issues that matter most to tenants and leaseholders. This reflects the scrutiny-focused approach taken in last year's statement.

Whilst complaints are an important opportunity to learn and improve, they also provide an indication of where residents feel services have not met their expectations. For that reason, I have considered not only complaints handling performance, but also the themes emerging from complaints, feedback from tenants and the lessons arising from Housing Ombudsman investigations.

There has been positive progress during the year, including continued work to strengthen complaints handling arrangements, improve governance and embed learning into service delivery. However, it is important that we remain realistic about the challenges that remain. Complaints continue to highlight the importance of delivering services consistently, communicating clearly with residents and resolving issues at the earliest opportunity.

I have challenged officers on how learning is being used not simply to improve complaint responses, but to reduce the causes of complaints in the first place. Residents rightly expect services to learn from mistakes, prevent issues from recurring and demonstrate that feedback has led to meaningful change.

I am satisfied that the self-assessment accurately reflects the council's current position and that there are appropriate plans in place to address identified areas for improvement. However, those plans must now be delivered and their impact evidenced through improved outcomes and tenant experience.

Alongside our wider governance arrangements, I will continue to receive regular performance and improvement updates to ensure that progress is being made, learning is being embedded and services remain focused on delivering better outcomes for tenants and leaseholders.

Making a complaint

For more information on making a complaint please visit the [Homes and Neighbourhoods' website](#) or contact the Customer Support and Information Team on 01484 414886 where a member of the team can discuss and log your complaint.